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EDUCATIONAL WRITINGS

The first number of the first volume of the *Journal of the National Education Association* was issued late in September. It is made up of 95 pages of reading-matter corresponding exactly to the first 95 pages of the volume of proceedings which has heretofore been published annually by the Association. The second and third cover pages are used for the announcement of the new officers of the Association and for a brief description of the publications of the Association.

In this form the *Journal* brings to the members of the Association at a date earlier than has heretofore been possible a part of the proceedings of the annual meeting. Subsequent numbers appearing each month will serve a like purpose. Strict adherence to this reportorial function, however, deprives the *Journal* of any character as a periodical publication. It is doubtless advantageous that the elaborate proceedings of the annual meetings should be sent out promptly and that readers shall be induced to read the papers because they come in small doses. But there are current activities of the Association which should have some way of expressing themselves before they are crystallized into that finished and often final form which they exhibit in the proceedings.

For example, there are several committees at work in the Association. Some of these would profit greatly in their work if they could communicate in a preliminary way with the members of the Association. Some committees want co-operation or special types of information. The *Journal* of the Association should be available as an avenue of communication.

Again, the Association publishes from time to time bulletins announcing the programs of the Association and containing important statements of policy by the officers of the Association. These bulletins are thin, irregular publications. Therefore, like all irregular printed matter, they are almost inaccessible to all except those who methodically file what they receive through the second-class mail. Why should not the *Journal* carry this type of material?

The opening of the pages of the *Journal* to committees and to officers would not be showing partiality to educational enterprises, because the official character of the types of communication referred to is already recognized by the Association in that the committees and officers have been duly authorized to represent the Association.

There is objection in some quarters to this *Journal*, and the Secretary is undoubtedly wise in holding rigidly to the form of the proceedings during the early issues. Some editors are afraid of competition. Some anxious members are afraid that overzealous writers will exploit the *Journal*. There will, therefore, be much hesitation in launching any new department of the *Journal*. But the enlargement is logical and highly desirable. There ought to be a great central national journal of education. There ought to be the most unlimited support for such a journal. So far as the *Elementary School Journal* is concerned, this Volume I, Number 1, of the Association's new journal is a most welcome addition to the agencies which are devoted to the spread of educational information. May the *Journal* enlarge its sphere of operations and influences as rapidly as possible.

Supervised study is advocated everywhere in recent educational writings, but there is very little definite advice either to teachers or to students about how to carry on the studying process. Two additions to the literature telling how to study will be found very useful, therefore, even though they were not written primarily for elementary-school pupils or teachers.

Professor Whipple,[1] writing in the form of direct advice to high-school students, has brought together in thirty-eight formulated rules of procedure the best single statement of the psychology of study that has ever been formulated. Each rule is stated and illustrated. The discussions are clear and interesting. They can be followed easily by pupils in the upper grades, and all elementary teachers can use the teachings of the book even if they do not put the book itself into the hands of their pupils.

The first maxims relate to physical conditions and show the importance of proper hygienic conditions for study. Next comes a series of maxims relating to what might be called the habituation side of the process: Have a regular place and time for work, and so on. Then come arguments in favor of concentration and organization. The author does not make it all appear easy. One must learn by heart some of the items needed; one must review and think over his work.

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[1] *How to Study Effectively*. By Guy Montrose Whipple. Bloomington, Ill.: Public-School Publishing Co., 1916. Pp. 44.

The following quotation gives a typical view of the way in which Professor Whipple has driven home his maxim by an apt illustration (p. 16):

> Do your work with the intent to learn and to remember.
>
> Laboratory experiments with memorizing under different conditions show very clearly that one of the most important conditions of good memory is the taking of the attitude of "intent to remember" when the materials to be learned are presented. Closely allied with this is the attitude of "confidence" in one's ability to remember what one is learning. An illustration may be seen in the following incident. I once had occasion to read aloud a list of words to a student enough times so that he could recite them correctly. I repeated the process with a second and with a third student. I then discovered to my amazement that I was unable to recite the list by heart myself. Here not only the most charitable, but also the psychologically correct explanation is that I never *intended* to learn the list myself. I had repeated it mechanically and not in the memorizing attitude.

At the end of the book is a list of readings which deal with like topics.

The second volume[1] on this general topic is by Professor George Van Ness Dearborn. This book is very different in its method of attack from Professor Whipple's book. Professor Dearborn reviews many of the psychological and physiological discussions from which principles of procedure in study may be drawn. He also emphasizes certain special aspects of the processes of study, such as the cultivation of imagination.

Taking this topic as typical of Professor Dearborn's whole book, it must be said that one finds more about imagination in a broad, general, abstract way than one finds of practical formulas for the cultivation of imagination. Take, for example, pp. 112 and 113, where the author gives some of his most practical paragraphs.

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[1] *How to Learn Easily*. By George Van Ness Dearborn. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1916. Pp. 227.

It must be admitted that one is left without any very clear idea of what to do in school work after reading such paragraphs as these:

> No knowledge can be made our very own without this creative process, often called "assimilation" to the contents of the mind. Summarizing, reviewing, and abstracting is a practical and mechanical process of using the constructive imagination. Better still in the process of using our memory to the best advantage is thought, thinking things over that we have just learned; there can be no true education without the essentials of this process, for it means self-reliance, independence, even manhood and womanhood. Thought over a study-topic tends, by association, to go beyond the original limits of the assignment as learned; and this is pure imagination. Thus it becomes the basis of initiative, of ingenuity, and of originality, of all true creation.
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> The *creation of diagrams and illustrations* is using the imagination to a great advantage; and the process is art in the making.
>
> The constructive imagination may be aided in fact and consciously and deliberately developed by many proper means. In childhood it may be developed by the reading or hearing of fairy stories; *Swiss Family Robinson*, and all such books; later on by the reading of books as *The Fairy Land of Science*, Thomson's *Wonder of Life*, histories of discoveries, Sir Oliver Lodge's presidential address on continuity, the novels of Jules Verne and H. G. Wells; by talking with fanciful and imaginative persons; and often by an active process of deliberate revery.
>
> Another mode by which the creative imagination may be developed is the enlargement of our vocabulary, our list of words and the habitual use of these idea-handles in writing. New terms lead to new associations. In general, as we shall see, the dictionary is not used nearly so much as it should be for easy learning; its disuse is largely due to muscular laziness, not to mental indifference [pp. 112–13].

One may venture to quarrel, too, with Professor Dearborn's title. Whoever starts on his educational career with the idea that learning is best done when it is most easily done has hardly read his psychology aright or realized fully the meaning of human experience. Learning is work and always will be. The business of the school is to systematize and organize work, not to evade it.

Three reports of educational surveys came to hand during September. One deals with the higher state institutions of Iowa. That state, like many another, has a complicated educational problem growing out of the fact that the agricultural college and the state institution for the training of teachers are geographically separate from the state university. In the course of their development these higher state institutions have duplicated each other's work and have in some respects become unfriendly rivals. A few years ago the central Board of Education of the state of Iowa attempted to cure all the difficulties that had grown up within the state by arbitrarily redistributing all the functions of the various institutions. That effort failed because the allotment was not acceptable to the institutions themselves or to the people. Last year the Board carried on through a commission organized by the Commissioner of Education of the United States a survey[1] of the whole situation.

The report makes it clear that the actual duplication of work is, from the point of view of financial waste, a matter of very minor importance. On the other hand, there is an unwholesome rivalry in certain directions which is most unprofitable. Especially does it appear to be true that the state is badly organized in the matter of the training provided for teachers. Furthermore, the duplications in education courses are unfortunate, because the demand for training of teachers is so urgent that even if the facilities were well co-ordinated they would not be adequate.

Perhaps the purposes of this *Jaurnal* will be best served by dwelling upon the attitude of the survey commission with reference to the teachers' college at Cedar Falls. This attitude can be set forth in the following quotations:

> With regard to the proposed discontinuance [beyond the second year of the professional work] of the work in liberal arts at Teachers College, Cedar Falls, the commission is disposed to urge the wisdom of this on several grounds. In the first place, it seems reasonably clear that the institutions at Ames and Iowa City are at present abundantly able to care for all students who may be expected to seek the Bachelor's degree in a state institution in Iowa. . . . . In the second place, the commission feels certain that at present, at least, the atmosphere of the institution is not unequivocally collegiate, and that students who now receive training there for the Bachelor's degree are likely to miss certain valuable elements in such training. . . . . In the third place, the amount of work now offered as of third- and fourth-year college grade is relatively small and may be regarded as only barely sufficient to round out a senior-college curriculum. . . . .

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[1] *State Higher Educational Institutions of Iowa,* Bureau of Education Bulletin No. 19, 1916. Pp. 223.

Under these circumstances the commission feels that the expenditure of money and energy represented in keeping up the last two years of collegiate work at Cedar Falls is probably not to be justified on its merits. The commission would not be understood in this opinion as intending to depreciate in any way the seriousness of the work offered, nor the devotion and earnestness of the staff of instruction. The professional work done here is creditable to the state and to the authorities of the school, but a division of energy such as is suggested would in the long run contribute to the efficiency of the state institutions as a whole. . . . .

More particularly the commission would call attention to the desirability of greatly enlarging the facilities for practice teaching at Teachers College. . . . .

It [the survey commission] recommends, therefore, that the courses for elementary teachers, both rural and urban, be made three years in length, substantially one-third of the time to be devoted to professional subjects, and the rest to work dealing with the subject-matter of instruction. . . . .

If the board does not see fit to adopt these suggestions, however, and if the plans at present in operation be continued, then the commission would advise that the last two years of the work be very greatly strengthened to bring it more nearly into line with the curricula of first-class institutions conferring the Bachelor's degree.

Whether the suggestion made above be adopted or not, the commission is perfectly clear that there are today no agencies in Iowa adequate to furnish proper training to the number of teachers annually required in the schools of the state. This fact has evidently been recognized in the legislation providing for the addition of a year of normal training in certain high schools. The commission is fully cognizant of this situation, and its suggestion regarding Teachers College is therefore in no sense directed to any lessening of the resources of the state in this direction. There should be additional normal schools established, in parts of the state remote from Cedar Falls and probably preferably in the southwest and northwest divisions of the state. . . . .

In this connection attention should be called to the possibility of adding a group of strong men to the faculty of Teachers College (and to other normal schools, if established), who might give one-half of their time to instruction and the other half to service as members of the staff of the state superintendent of public instruction, supervising the work of the normal-training high schools. Such an arrangement would greatly enhance the solidity and efficiency of the normal training courses and would bring both the state superintendent's office and the normal schools into most helpful organic connection with these high schools. Any measure that will improve the supervision of the training of rural teachers and that will put at their disposal added opportunities for practice teaching ought to be energetically fostered [pp. 54–57].

The other two survey reports referred to must be treated briefly.

Professor Bobbitt has reported in Part II of the *School Survey of Denver*[1] on the work of the elementary schools. This document, like the earlier reports prepared by Dr. Bobbitt for South Bend, San Antonio, and Cleveland, is a vigorous plea for an enlargement and standardization of the elementary course.

If one looks for a typical passage, he finds it in the introduction to the chapter of the report which deals with history:

> History in the Denver schools is a seriously neglected subject. It is systematically taught in only the eighth grade. It finds a place on the program of the seventh grade in less than half of the schools of the city; and in these schools it receives a median amount of time of only thirty minutes a week. History is found on the program in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades in less than half of the schools; and also in these schools it receives a median amount of but thirty minutes a week. Whereas in cities in general more than 6 per cent of the total elementary school recitation time is given to history, in Denver only a little more than 2 per cent of this total elementary time is given to the subject. Even in the one grade in which it is systematically taught, it is given a less proportion of the time than the average of cities in general for this grade. The large neglect of the subject in grades four, five, six, and seven is very unusual.
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> Forty per cent of the children leave school before the eighth grade. This means that almost half of the citizens of Denver do not receive the necessary training for American citizenship that comes through at least one year's full systematic study of American history. Those who need this type of training most are those who come from homes that have not already the traditions of American citizenship and the general American outlook upon affairs. In other words, it is the children of immigrant families who are in greater need of American history than the children of native American stock. And yet it is these children of immigrant parentage who drop out of school in largest numbers before the eighth grade is reached. It is probable that a majority of immigrant children leave school without having had American history. This should receive immediate attention.
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> "History teaching in elementary schools should make for good and efficient citizenship," says the course of study. The position is well taken. The greatest single task before American education today is efficient training for citizenship. Of the instruments for this training, none is more important than history. We recommend, therefore, that the subject be effectively used for the purpose and that the amount of time given to it in the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh grades be greatly increased [p. 77].

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[1] *Report of the School Survey of Denver.* Part II, "The Work of the Schools; Elementary Schools," by Franklin Bobbitt; "High Schools," by Charles H. Judd. Denver: The School Survey Committee, 1916. Pp. 180.

In connection with a general survey[1] of the rural life of Lane County, Oregon, Professor Ayer has described in detail (Part IV) the school situation in the county and has discussed the reforms in organization which are urgently needed.

Before referring to the conclusions of the educational survey, it is appropriate to remark on the fact that the State University of Oregon has undertaken through its extension department a most important service in carrying on these school surveys. The federal Bureau of Education, state departments of education, and the departments of education in state universities would seem to be the natural authorities to which communities ought to turn when they are in need of that general supervisory assistance which a survey affords.

Mr. Ayer's general conclusions can be summarized in his concluding paragraph as follows:

> Careful reading of the foregoing pages will disclose the fact that there are many phases of education and numerous individual schools in Lane County which receive commendation and which are worthy of imitation elsewhere. Judging from the standards which have been set elsewhere, rural education may be said to be above the average. But average rural education in the United States is far from satisfactory. Most certainly it will not answer in Lane County, where the promotion of rural life and efficiency is of first importance to the ultimate welfare of the entire population. Little space has been given to pointing out local defects which may be remedied over night, for the trouble is deep-seated, and one which demands rigorous treatment, no less than the complete reorganization of county educational administration.
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> It will take time to attain the ideals here set forth, but because the journey may prove long is no reason for delaying the start. If rural education in Lane County is to meet the needs of country life in an adequate manner, definite progress should be made at an early date toward the following changes: (1) development of consolidated grade schools and union high schools at points which, geographically and economically, are "natural" community centers; (2) adoption of the county unit system in place of the present one-sided system of county educational administration; (3) extension of the present rural supervisory system; (4) equalization of the burdens of taxation for school purposes by increasing the proportional amounts borne by the state and county, and lowering the proportional amount borne by local school districts; (5) distribution of authority among state, county, and district school officials

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[1] *A Rural Survey of Lane County, Oregon.* By Fred C. Ayer and Herman N. Morse. Published by the Extension Division, University of Oregon, 1916. Pp. 109.

in such a manner as (*a*) to adjust the course of study to local needs, (*b*) to stimulate local school support, and (*c*) to insure equal educational opportunities in all parts of the county [pp. 108–9].

A recent bulletin on *The Content of American History as Taught in the Seventh and Eighth Grades*, by Drs. W. C. Bagley and H. O. Rugg,[1] gives the present status of history instruction in these grades, as shown by the content of twenty-three elementary textbooks. The study of textbooks was undertaken as a part of the effort to find criteria and methods for designing the "minimal essentials" of the elementary curriculum which was initiated by the Committee on Economy of Time of the National Education Association in 1912. The writers start from the following fundamental assumptions: first, history instruction is of major importance in forming lasting attitudes toward, and ideals concerning, national issues; secondly, there is need for a "core" of material in the subjects of the elementary grades which will include the facts and principles that form part of the culture common to all the people; thirdly, the determination of the ideal content of the course of historical instruction will be facilitated by ascertaining with exactness present prevalent practice; fourthly, textbooks form the basis of instruction in history and should be scientifically studied to find these common facts and principles.

The material in twenty-three histories published for use in the seventh and eighth grades is classified by typical periods with the aim of establishing the present content of historical instruction and significant changes that this content has undergone in the past half-century of textbook writing. The relative importance of each type of fact is measured by the proportion of space (i.e., the percentage of words) denoted to that topic in each textbook. Results are shown by detailed tabulations which give the percentage of each book devoted to each topic occurring in as many as half of the books, and the relative frequency of mention of various persons grouped by "publication periods." The interpretive comment running throughout the monograph summarizes for the reader the essential characteristics of present historical content and points out the striking developments of the past fifty years. It emphasizes the present predominance of political and military materials, but points out their declining importance and the increasing emphasis on social, economic, and industrial developments. It indicates the kinds of pedagogical helps that more recent historical instruction is demanding and receiving, namely, improvements in style, increased use of the "problem," more frequent use of pictures, maps, anecdotes, etc. It contributes to our knowledge of present "standardized" content of history instruction by definitely establishing the distinct "core" of common topics running throughout our American histories.

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[1] *University of Illinois, School of Education, Bulletin No. 16*, Urbana, Ill., 1916.

This study represents the type of foundational work that must be done on the content side of the elementary subjects before any thoroughgoing experimental attack can be made in the direction of improving methods of instruction. The facts presented should be of definite service to persons working on the problems of design in history courses. The study will doubtless be criticized because of the methods of selection of textbooks, which the writers speak of as "random." To determine the actual content of history instruction at the present time books should be selected with reference to their "frequency of use." Whether any significant differences in common materials would be found in a different selection of texts should be ascertained before any detailed use is made of the facts standardized by this bulletin.

The rapid organization of special classes for backward children has created a demand for special material to be used in teaching the children of such classes. It is very evident to all students of the problem that the conventional school material will not serve. Even if defectives are to learn to read—and it is altogether certain that too much reading has been attempted with some of them—the approach to the reading-lesson with them must be very different from the ordinary approach. We shall, therefore, find in increasing measure contributions to the educational material designed to meet the needs of teachers of defectives.

Miss Hilda A. Wrightson has prepared a volume[1] which is characterized in the introduction by Dr. Goddard by the following statements:

> Miss Wrightson has brought together in convenient form a large number of games especially adapted to accomplish these results. . . . .
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> The teacher unfamiliar with feeble minds will perhaps think some of the games here described of no value. It is always hard for the more intelligent to understand the less intelligent, for normal teachers to understand defective children. It should be remembered that the joy of accomplishment is one of the greatest joys of life for all grades of intelligence. It is the fact that the list includes games adapted to the simplest minds which constitutes one of its excellences.
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> It should not be forgotten that these games not only develop co-ordination and attention; manners, morals, self-control, altruism, patience, and many more desirable qualities are involved. What more can education do than develop to the limit of the individual's capacity these qualities which, possessed even in a small degree, will help to make him a social rather than an anti-social being?

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[1] *Games and Exercises for Mental Defectives.* By Hilda A. Wrightson. Cambridge, Mass.: Caustic-Claflin Co., 1916. Pp. 100.